Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

An alternative vessel closure probe 70 will be explained with reference to FIGS. 11A through 11E. This embodiment includes an articulatable foot 24 having a pair of needle receptacles 52, as described above. Although each needle receptacle 52 contains a fitting 40 for coupling a flexible filament to a tip of an associated needle, the filament in this case comprises a ~~short length of suture 74 (or some~~ temporary connecting filament 74, as shown schematically in phantom in FIG. ~~11A)~~ 11A, spanning directly between the needle receptacles. Rather than pulling the two ends of an extended loop through the needle paths and proximally out the tissue tract for tying, closure system 70 advances a single end of the suture distally along one needle path, across the puncture, and then proximally along the other needle path. To provide this interaction, at least one needle includes means for attaching suture 34 to ~~short suture~~ connecting filament 74, here in the form of a detachable coupling structure carried on the at least one needle. This structure facilitates the use of a pre-tied knot.

C1

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As can be understood with reference to FIGS. 11C and D, hollow needle 38' and needle 38 advance to engage fittings 40 within receptacles 52. Hollow needle 38' draws first end 76 of suture 34 distally through vessel wall W, and detachable tip 78 is secured into an associated fitting 40 using the barb and tab interaction described above. As ~~short suture~~ connecting filament 74 extends between fittings 40, and as detachable tip 78 can pull free of hollow needle 38' when the needles are withdrawn, this effectively couples needle 38 to first end 76 of suture 34. The detachable tip riding partially within the hollow needle (or vice versa) so that the assembly remains together under compression. Hence, needle 38 can pull the suture distally along the needle path formed by hollow needle 38', across the puncture P, and proximally along the needle path formed by needle 38, as illustrated in FIG. 11D.

C2

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

C3

FIGS. 11D and E show that the knot can be completed by pulling needle 38, ~~short suture~~ connecting filament 74, and ~~second~~ first end 76 of suture 34 (together with the fittings 40 and detachable needle tip 78) proximally through bight 80. Second end 82 of suture 34 can be pulled to free bight 80, and the ends of the suture can be tightened and the probe removed to provide permanent hemostasis.